

Nauruan Homesteads 1935 – Meneng District

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Date: 15th September 2022

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1. Introduction

The following information is based on the field notes forming part of the Papers of Camilla Wedgwood.¹

During her ethnological investigations on Nauru in 1935, Camilla Wedgwood recorded - among other things - genealogies, and made a survey of the homesteads (or hamlets) in Meneng District.

2. Earlier surveys

There is an earlier record of the homesteads of Nauru, which is found in the work of Paul Hambruch. Based on his visits to Nauru in 1910, he presents a list of homesteads of Nauru (pages 59-62 of his work *Nauru, Halbband I*).

He lists the following homesteads for Meneng Districts (taken from page 60 of *Nauru, Hallland I* :

4. Gau: Mēneñ (<i>Menen</i>). Oberhaupt: Nobup' ʔ. Sippe: Eamuit.	
Aruaño (<i>Orouengo</i>)	Ārāti (<i>Ratschi</i>)
Atabuagabāp	Ueó
Au(dajuñijun	Ibue (<i>Ibue</i>)
Badi	Anabāređi
Bagabāp	Erā
Ažiieubār	Aribimomo
Irēbedi	Ataró (<i>Taro</i>)
Aniuēn	Anaue (<i>Nauve</i>)
Atouēdudu	Atae.

The above list gives the name of the head chief at the time, Nobop (of the Eamwit clan).

The list Hambruch presents is a listing of the homesteads running in succession from the border with Yaren District along the coastline to the border with Anibare District starting at the border with Yaren District at the top of the left hand column, and ending at the border with Anibare district at the bottom of the right hand column.

The words in parenthesis are the names as recorded in 1890 by the diplomatic-corps Secretary W. Eggert, who was based on Jaluit Atoll (the capital of the Schutzgebiet der Marschall-Inseln (Marshall Islands Protectorate) of the German Empire. Secretary Eggert's visit to Nauru (which was included in the Protectorate at the time) resulted in his being the first German official to have drawn up a map of Nauru, on which are located place names. A copy of the map is in the Appendix.²

3. Comparison between Hambruch and Wedgwood listings

The names of the homesteads recorded for Meneng District by Paul Hambruch in 1910 (page 60, *Nauru, Halbband I*) bear some semblance to some of those recorded by Camilla Wedgwood. He records the names of 18 homestead. 11 of the 18 names bear some resemblance to Camilla Wedgwood's recording, i.e.:

Hambruch	Wedgwood
Aruaño	Arwaño
Badi	Bwadi
Bagabap	(given as the name of a pool associated with Bwadi)
Aniuen	Aniwen
Irebedi	Irebedji
Arati	Ratsi
Ueo	Wejo
Ibue	Ibwi
Anabaredi	Anabaredi
Ataro	Ataro
Anaue	Anauwe

Some of the discrepancies are easily explained when one understands the orthographical conventions used by the different authors. Six differences are in evidence in the list above.

- (1) Hambruch uses the diphthong 'ue', realized as 'we' by Wedgwood. And the diphthong 'ua', realized as 'wa' by Wedgwood. The use of these diphthongs by a German writer is not unusual as 'w' is pronounced in German as 'v'.
- (2) In the homestead name given by Hambruch as "Ibue", there is a different vowel quality in Wedgwood's recording.

- (3) Nauruan bilabial stops (p, b) and the bilabial nasal (m) have two realizations, one is velar and the other palatal. The acoustic output of the palatalized series of the stops varies, and this may account for the “Badi” versus “Bwadi” forms.
- (4) ‘t’ and ‘d’ have affricate variants before the vowel ‘i’, accounting for the doublets :
 Irebedi versus Irebedji
 Arati versus Ratsi
- (5) There is a complementary vowel (quality unknown) before the homestead “Arati” in Hambruch’s list, as against Wedgwood’s recording of “Ratsi”.
- (6) The velar nasal is represented by ‘ñ’ in Hambruch and ‘ŋ’ in Wedgwood.³

4. Wedgwood’s Listing

Camilla Wedgwood lists 20 homesteads, running along the flat coastal terrace located between the shallow intertidal fringing reef and the central plateau (forming about 80% of the island). Apart from the area surrounding the inland lake known as Buada Lagoon⁴, all of the traditional hamlets were located on the flat coastal terrace.⁵

As with the list given by Hambruch, the homesteads run in succession from the border with Yaren District along the coastline to the border with Anibare District. The spellings of the homesteads and their occupants are as presented in Camilla Wedgwood’s notes.³

MENENG HOMESTEADS 1935:

1 – [name is not recorded]⁶ (located below coastal road near to Yaren boundary)

- 1 House of Tsimion and his wife Tsiowe [or (?) of Abugayo with his wife Egogodage].

2 - **JAHOW.** (located below coastal road along from 1)

- 2A. House of Bwaubwo and Miriam.
- 2B. House of Adzimo.

3 - **ARUANO.** (located below coastal road along from 2)

- 3A House of Baru.
- 3B House of Arinowa and his wife and child.

4 - **ANABAREBAREN.** (located above coastal road opposite 3B)

- 4 House of Joram and his wife Edoija.

5 - **AIAREN.** (located below coastal road along from 3B, opposite pond Atumutu which lies above coastal road)

- 5 House of Etabaiuw, Eijerubo, and Ejamwit.

6 - **DEREREBWON**. (located below coastal road along from 5)

- 6A House of Argadzio.
- 6B House of Emodjiben.

7 - **ANABWAUBWOW**. (located above coastal road opposite 6A)

- 7 House of Garupau and Ewanani his wife and their daughter (They are the parents of Argadzio) , and Ewanani's sister Edidiep.

8 - **BWADI**. (located below coastal road along from 6B)

- 8A House of Dodiwea. (nearest to road)
- 8B House of Beijedow and Domianar. (below 8A, and nearest to shoreline)
- 8C House of Edjimtur, Dodiwea's daughter. (in line with 8A further along)

9 – [No name given] ⁷ (located above coastal road opposite 8A, on left side of Bagabap pond)

- 9 House formerly occupied by Baru, but now not lived in.

10 – [No name given] ⁷ (located above coastal road opposite 8C, on right side of Bagabap pond)

- 10. House of Dagia and his son Abor live here (his daughter Olga married to Mareow and living in Uaboe).

11 - **BWIETEJIBUAR**. (located below coastal road along from 8C)

- 11A House of Eanjer, her husband Sam and their son Garigari.
- 11B House of Aku and Etsiama and his children Edjimow, Ida, and Edediage

12 - **AUKWONJ.** (located below coastal road along from 11)

- 12 House of Alikilik (Marshall Islander) and his wife Naomi, and their five children.

13 - **ANIWEN.** (13A is located above coastal road opposite 12, and 13B and 13C are located below coastal road opposite 14A)

- 13A House of Emiraubo.
- 13B House of Sebe and Garodiage.
- 13C House of Ebeano and [Agidouwa, deceased], and her son Denaga.(behind 13B nearersshore)

14 - **IREBEDJI.**

- 14A House of Enogina, her husband and children and sister. (below coastal road along from 13B)
- 14B House of Aiebigo. (in between 14A and 14CC)
- 14C House of Martin, sister's son of Aiebigo. (nearest to shore)
- 14D House of Erode and her two children. Her husband Jose is in LS (below road in line with 14A)
- 14E House of Ebewede. (located above coastal road opposite 14D)
- 14F House of Ebewede's daughter Enjabate, Edemamira, and their child (further inland than 14E)

15 - **RATSI.** (located below coastal road)

- 15 Home of Bop chief of Meneng and his wife Iniga.

16 - **WEJO.**(located below coastal road)

- 16 House being built for Bagada.

17 - **IBWI.** (located below coastal road)

- 17A House of Eneme, Dabwadau and family.
- 17B House of Enamano. (to right of A nearer to shore)
- 17C House of Gadaraua (Peda), his wife Epinina and family.(to right of B just below coastal road)
- 7D House of Idikiri (Eidikiri). (between C and E)
- 17E House of Eniwano. (nearer to shore)
- 17F House of Aidawong, Edidiep' (below coastal road further along from C)
- 17G House of Emetsi, Odziano and children.(along from F)
- 17H House of Ebugia, mother of Emetsi. (along from H)

18 - **ADANGIDANG.** (located below coastal road along from 17H)

- 18 House of Denagabwida (Denagubuda) and his wife Edarei (Edarait).

19 - **ANABAREDI.** (located below coastal road along from 18)

- 19 House of Odueni.

20 - **IANJOM.** (located below coastal road along from 19)

- 20A House of Tjegbet and his wife Dzina and young daughter.
- 20B House of Tauwe and Enamano and children.

21- [No name given] (located above coastal road further along from 20B)

- 21 House of Emagait.

22 - **ATARO.** (located above coastal road further along from 21)

- 22A House of Dagidouwa.
- 22B House of Eno, Etararo and Diajea
- 22C House of Ekioe and Djimoden and family.(located above coastal road further long from 22A)

23 – **ANAUWE**. (located above the coastal highway; it is the last homestead before Anibare boundary)

- 23A Johanes.
- 23B Djinenjen and Etagogo.
- 23C Ebiatdanidan and Dubudu.
- 23D Jeremia and his wife.

5. Conclusion

No further comment is made here about the accuracy of the list, or the names of the homesteads and their residents. The information is presented as it stands for the general interest of the Nauruan people as an historical snapshot of Meneng District in 1935 to be commented on, and enlarged on by the Nauruan people.

6. Notes.

¹ – Papers of Camilla Wedgwood, National Library of Australia.

² – W. Eggert's map is found in the Imperial German Government report for German protectorates dated 1890, attached as a fold-out at page 186 of the 3rd volume.

³ – The velar nasal is represented by the International Phonetic Alphabet letter *ŋ*, whereas the letter *ñ* or the digraph *ng* are more usual in written Nauruan. Nauruan is at present lacking an official orthography. For more on Nauruan phonology see David A. Hough (1974) and Kevin Hughes (2020)

⁴ - Buada Lagoon is a bit of a misnomer, as a lagoon is joined to the sea. In strict terms it is defined as an endorheic lake.

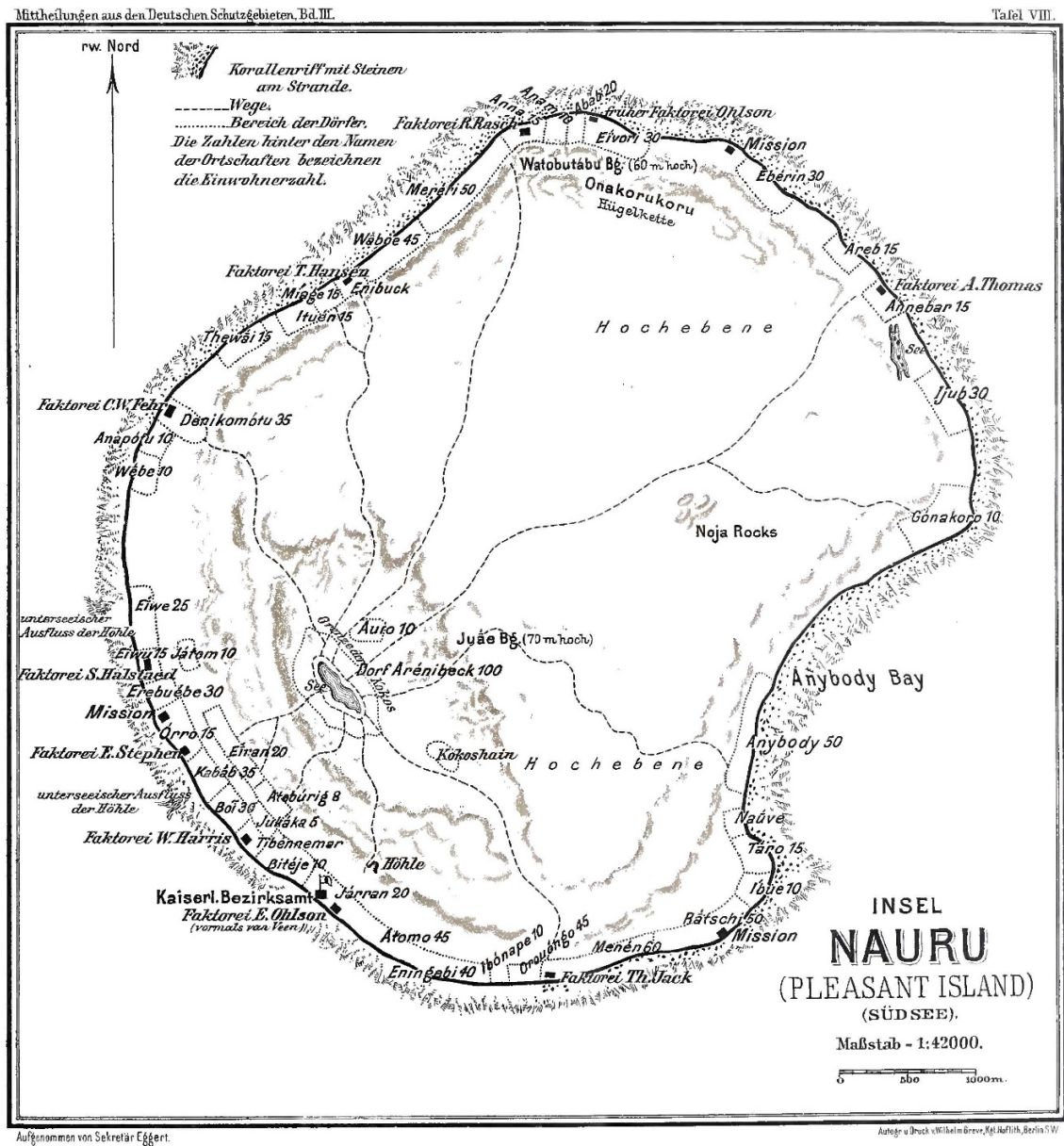
⁵ - The central plateau (known as Topside) remained empty of housing (apart from the traditional area adjoining Buada Lagoon) right up until 2001 - since when a large residential complex has been built and is associated with the controversial Australian migration policy of housing illegal immigrants in a detention facility, known officially as a regional processing centre.

⁶ - There is a hamlet name on Eggert's 1890 map – Ibonape – lying immediate to the west of his Oroungo (Wedgwood's Arwango). This hamlet name does not appear in Wedgwood's listing for Meneng nor Hambruch's listings for Yaren or Meneng. Yet there is a place name, Ibwenape, in use today associated with the area where Kayser had a Catholic church built.

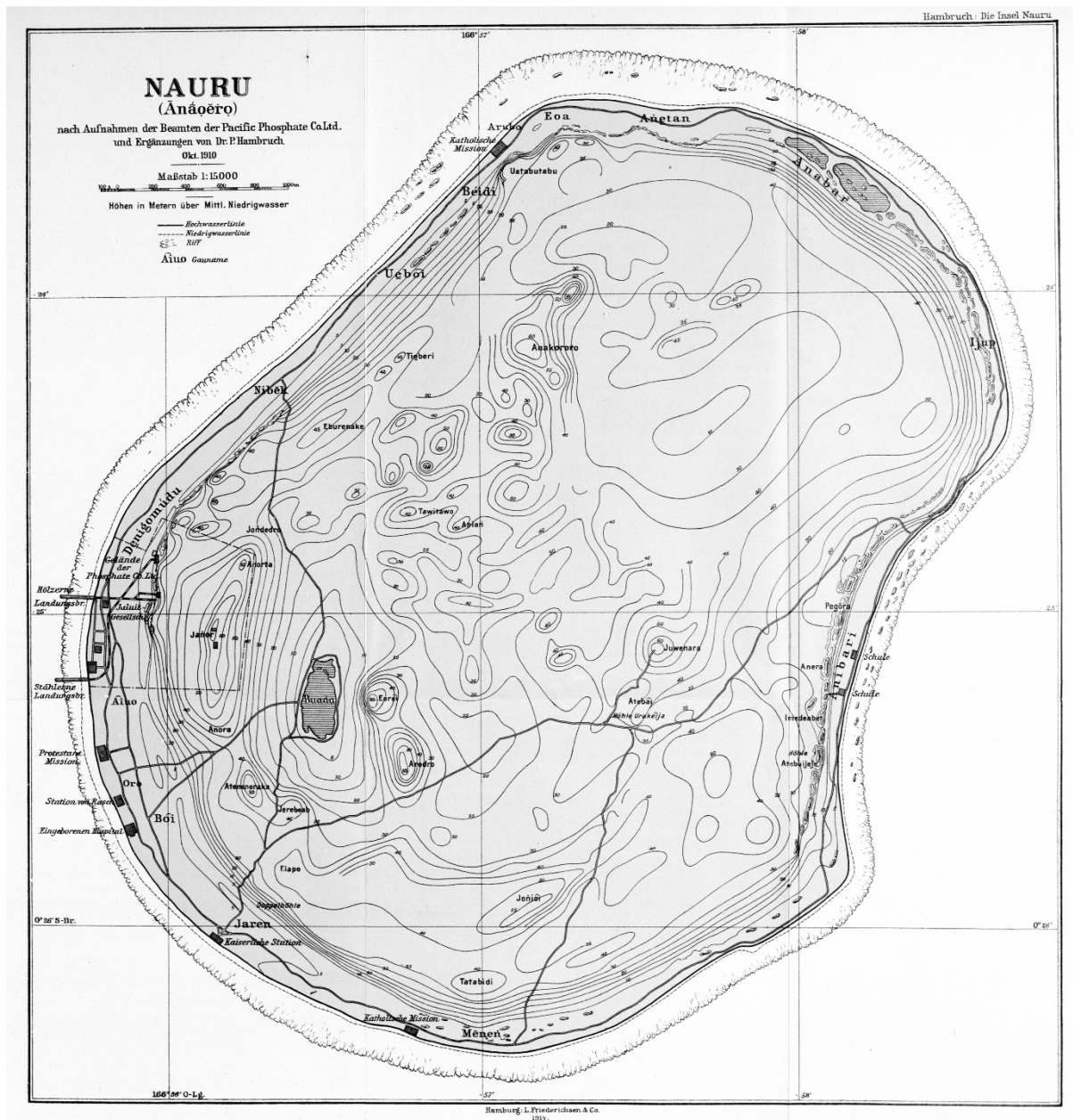
⁷ - These two dwellings are specifically said to be located by the pond Bagabap. Interestingly, one of the homesteads named by Hambruch is named Bagabap.

7.APPENDIX

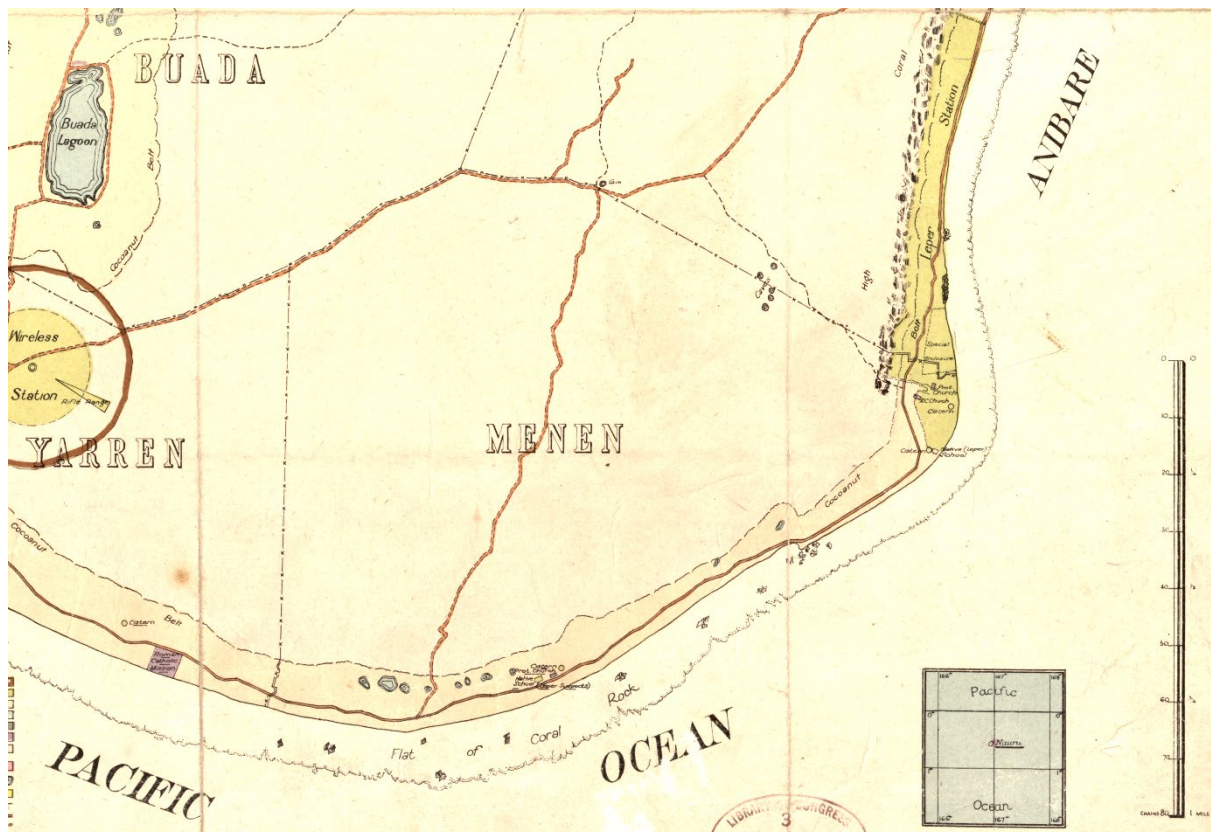
Map of Nauru by W. Eggert, 1890



Map of Nauru prepared by Pacific Phosphate Company, 1910



Meneng Section of Map of Nauru prepared by Administration of Nauru 1922



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